

# The Soul's Diary:

## *The Artistry of Secondary Progressions*

✓ Brian Clark

### **The Soul's Diary**

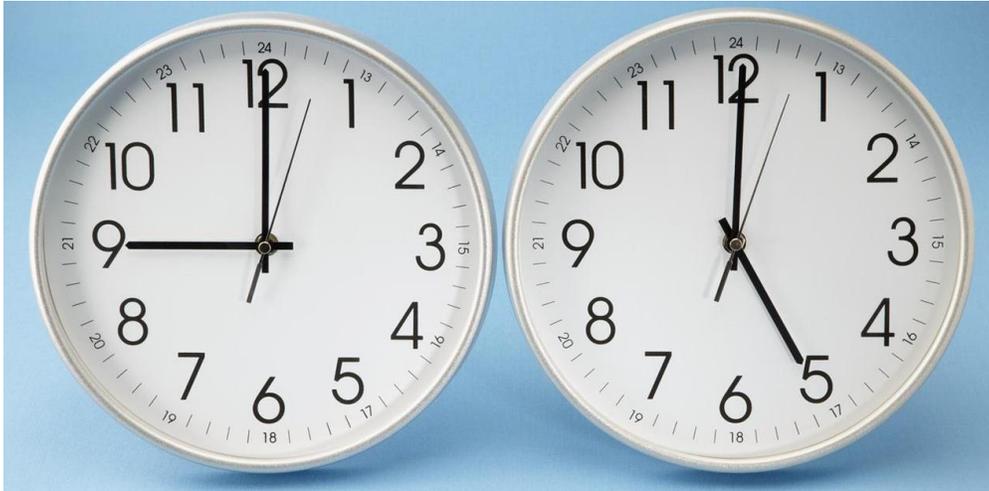
Soul is complex; it conjures up countless impressions, yet never is easily articulated. Philosophies, religious institutions, new age movements and publications, even music and food all claim this captivating word to arouse our imagination and grasp the intangible. When used randomly and without reflection, the word soul can be glib and ordinary, but when considered more thoughtfully, it invokes depth and reverence. I use the word in context of secondary progressions since this ambiguous astrological technique can be a contemplative symbol for deeply-felt experiences as well as an inspiration for meaningful self reflection.

Introducing secondary progressions is tricky as the technique not only defies a rational construct, but also confronts us with the nature of time. Time does not exist like physical objects do; nor do we have a sensory perception of time. We are acutely aware of time because of our ageing and our ability for episodic recall, to remember past events. Therefore time is intimately entwined with events. While we generally measure events from a linear and objective perspective, there are many subjective factors in any particular time that do not conform to a clock: moods, sentiment, feelings, reactions, senses and memories. The present is steeped in recollected time, so we habitually inhabit a remembered present. That is, our experience of the present is altered by the subjectivity of the past and the way we re-collect that.

Astrological timing does not only chronicle outer events or experiences, but astutely maps phases of the inner life. Transits identify the cosmic synchrony of events in the outer world which mirror those of the inner world. (1) All astrological techniques are able to synchronise time in both worlds, but secondary progressions uniquely use one order of time to give meaning to another. Using Secondary Progressions, the cosmic imprint of one day after birth is a metaphor for the first year of life, the second day after birth symbolises the second year of life and so on. This technique has proved to be a valuable tool in contemplating psyche's time, or what I have come to identify as the soul's diary. (2)

Secondary Progressions use one clock to measure a timeline in another dimension. Manoj Thulasidas suggests that 'time is a secondary sense without any direct sensory percept or reason for its existence' and argues that its measurement is open to interpretation. As part of his thesis he likens the time elapsed from the birth of the universe 15 billion years ago to 45 years. In this reckoning the beginning of Christianity 2000 years ago represents 3 minutes 9 seconds. (3) As he points out, time is relative and qualified. Similarly, this is the timing used for Secondary Progressions. While there are 'rational' explanations to support their usage, I would argue that the technique is more imaginative, therefore more subjective. Since we are linking a time already experienced early in life with a period later in the life, the method distances us from familiar timing techniques. Secondary progressions are like soul imprints which have their own unique timing. While most other

astrological methods generally link outer events to time, secondary progressions invite us to participate with imaginative and soulful qualities of time.



Using secondary progressions, astrologers are not dealing with a current timing of a planetary cycle, but the cycle's secondary expression in time. What might this secondary expression of time be? While it is related to the primary cycle of time, it will not be experienced or understood in this way; therefore, I imagine it more like a time of ripening and revelation. Secondary progressions encourage us to deconstruct our inclination to understand time through events.

Soul time is not clock time. Therefore let's not conceptualise soul timing, but see it symbolically. Symbols are ambiguous and resist interpretation. They convey meaning beyond the limit of any definition that we could assign them. In the same way soul is a symbol that defies a limited view or fixed definition; perhaps is better described in the ancient way as fluid, porous, ephemeral, and permeable. Soul is a perspective, a way of seeing or thinking, rather than a fixed point of view or belief. Similarly, secondary progressions also resist fixed interpretations and invite inquiry and reflection. When working with secondary progressions it is best to free yourself from connecting astrological time with literal events; rather, use astrological time as a mnemonic or symbol for contemplation.

### **Reflections on Secondaries**

Secondary progressions are the re-enactment of an earlier time previously impressed upon the psyche; therefore they are not foreign or unfamiliar. Having been previously felt, they are sensed like a 'déjà vu'. Any year of the life in a progressed horoscope is a re-experiencing of the same planetary energies and aspects that occurred shortly after birth. One of the first exercises I encourage students to do is photocopy the relevant ephemeris pages that signify their life progressions; start with the month of birth and the following three months. Only these three or four ephemeris pages represent your lifetime secondaries and every piece of information on those pages, whether it be the phases of the Moon, planetary stations or ingresses, become a secondary time. Study these pages: when did the Sun change signs for the first time after birth, when was the first New Moon, what planet was the first to change direction, what was the first aspect the Moon made....?

Secondary progressions can often feel vague and indefinite; therefore the technique is often eclipsed by clear-cut methods like transits or solar arc directions which outwardly reconstruct an individual's biography. Soul time is not linear; it is cyclical and repetitive, locating itself more in the past than the future. Therefore a valuable way to begin studying progressions is to consider the repetitive and cyclical nature of planets in secondary time. Consider the rhythm, cycle, design or pattern to the planet.

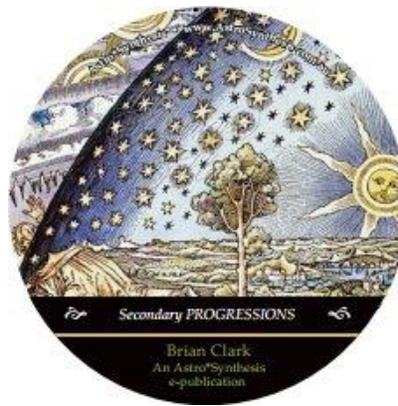
- For instance the Moon circumnavigates the natal chart in 27.3 years, the only planet by secondary progression to complete the zodiacal round. As the inner envoy of the outer Saturn cycle, it replicates its cycle three times in an average lifetime; the first round is youth, the second is adulthood and the third is eldership. It has both a generic and personal cycle: its aspects to the natal Moon characterise the life cycle, while its movement through the houses and its aspects to other planets personifies the private life. As it traverses the same house it re-members the previous cycle, not in terms of events but felt experiences. The Moon also progresses into a new sign every  $2\frac{1}{4}$  years repeating a cycle of planetary aspects.
- The Sun moves approximately a degree a year; therefore we might say its cycle is 30 years, when it returns to the degree of its birth position in the subsequent sign. It aspects each planet in order of degree repeating the sequence approximately thirty years later with an aspect thirty degrees higher.
- The progressions of the Sun and Moon form the Progressed Lunation Cycle, a cycle of 29.5 years. This cycle can be divided into eight phases which characterize the flow of one's life from beginning to culmination to recession and then the ending of the cycle, which renews itself at the next New Moon, a secondary metaphor for the beginning of another 29 - 30 year cycle which ensouls the phases of one's life.

Reflect on the process of the inner planets (Mercury, Venus and Mars): how might each archetype develop or mature? Secondary progressions are not static and the faster-moving planets reveal character development be it emotional maturing, the strengthening ego, intellectual development, the ripening of self esteem or the emergent will. Be imaginative in working with the secondary inner planets: are they oriental or occidental (rising/setting before or after the Sun), near a station, moving fast or slow? Will they change direction in your lifetime? In what years do they change signs and houses?

The movement of the social (Jupiter and Saturn) and outer planets (Uranus, Neptune and Pluto) is minimal; therefore these secondary progressed planets linger in aspect to natal planets, suggesting that these energies are harder to shift, being soulfully in contact with the weight of the past. But they may station and change direction in the secondary chart and this highlights a shifting perspective towards the archetype. With every chart you generate I would encourage you to consult the ephemeris in the few months after birth and see what planets changed direction; then translate that to secondary time. For instance Oprah Winfrey was born the evening of 29 January 1954 in Mississippi. Looking in the ephemeris we can see that 11 days after birth or 11 years in secondary time, Jupiter turned direct. Jupiter rules the IC and is in Gemini in her 10<sup>th</sup> house. What early soul imprints began to emerge at this time about her life direction? At 18 Saturn turned retrograde; at 21 Mercury turned retrograde, going direct at 43 while Uranus went direct at 56. From the

viewpoint of secondary progressions, these are meaningful years where the archetypal perspective of these energies is heightened.

Because secondary progressions can be uncertain and inarticulate, I persuade students to start with just the big three secondaries: The Moon, the Sun and their lunation cycle, especially tracking their progressed Moon from birth, focusing on its movement through the houses and its oppositions at ages 13 - 14, 41, 68 - 69 and its returns at ages 27 - 28, 55 - 56 and 82 - 83. Working with the progressed Moon over time you begin to discover the deep archival content that it holds. The progressed Sun represents the strengthening of the ego, developing tolerance and illuminating the self in all its ambiguity. Its repetitive aspects can be traced through the whole life while its progression into the next sign is always a potent shift in self-development. And finally the Progressed Lunation Cycle epitomizes one of astrology's most outstanding cycles - the eight phased 30-year soul mandala of life. (4)



### **The Progressed Moon: Moods, Memories and Mantras**

As a symbol of emotional maturity, the progressed Moon epitomizes our emotional reactions and feeling responses. Everything we have felt, wanted, tasted and reacted to is recorded, then remembered and released by the Moon as it cycles through the horoscope. As it progresses through the same house and sign polarity or aspects a planet once again in the subsequent cycle, fragmented aspects of the self are evoked, remembered and re-collected.

As a cycle it measures the phases of family life from birth of siblings (5) through adolescence, leaving home, adulthood, and old age until death. The progressed Moon reveals phases in the family system and changes in emotional attachments. Feeling memory is also stored in the body, in the adrenal or olfactory glands, the tension in the muscles, allergies and illnesses; therefore, the progressed Moon synchronises with bodily symptoms, a psychosomatic reminder of the emotional roots of our ailments. The body remembers, so does the mind. Primal lunar responses also become conscious through eating habits, changeable moods, anxieties, obsessions and rituals. Tracing the imprints of the progressed Moon often reveals the origins of and triggers for these emotive states.

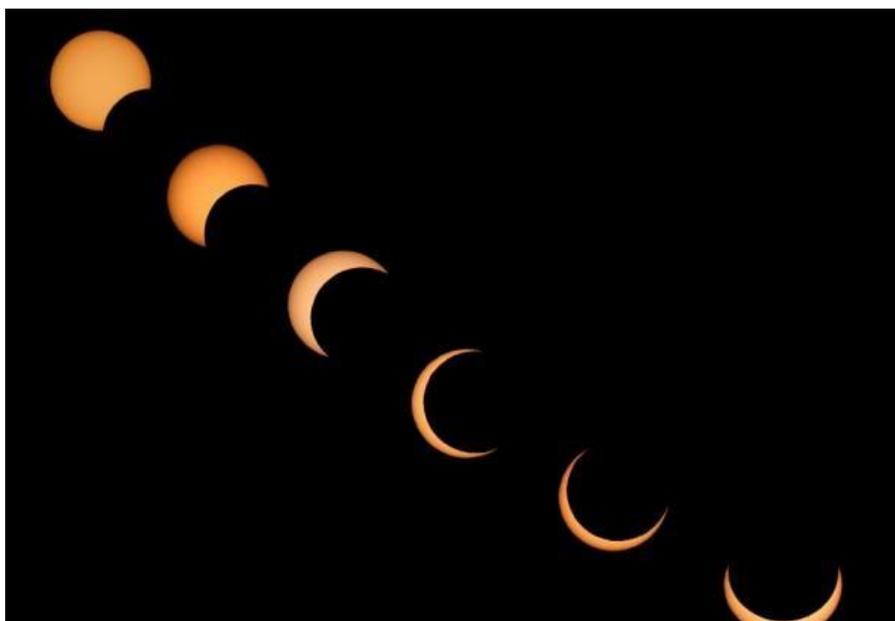
Emotional maturity is marked by the completion of its first revolution at age 27. By then, every emotional experience available to us is on record. Its second journey through the horoscope (27.3 - 54.6 years old) is the phase of adult life, when new emotional and personal attachments are formed. Life force is directed and creative. Giving birth literally,

or to the creative self, initiates us into the adult cycle when the child and adult co-exist. We start to remember and relive our earlier emotional experiences from an adult perspective. This maturation includes a greater choice about emotional responses and an ability to differentiate our feelings from those of others. During this second cycle of the progressed Moon, the same astrological territory is traversed but it is no longer virgin territory. The progressed Moon now acts as a loosening agent, freeing buried complexes, taboo feelings and repressed memories to be re-felt and find some acknowledgment and acceptance.

The third circuit of the progressed Moon (from 54.6 - 82 years old) initiates us into the elder phase of life symbolised by the wise woman, grandmother, tribal elder and crone. Emotional experiences are more anchored and directed, less reactive and instinctive. Our emotional attitudes can become integrated and understood enhancing our community.

When the progressed Moon enters a new house it evokes the complexes and issues within that sphere, generally symbolised by the planets in that house. In a previous article on the progressed Moon, I cited the example of John, a client who expressed that he was feeling extremely anxious, but was not aware of any cause for this. He was 32 at the time. (6) The progressed Moon had just crossed the IC, a tap root to the underlying issues of security and safety. Natally, Pluto and Uranus were in the 4<sup>th</sup> house opposing Saturn and Chiron in the 10<sup>th</sup>. During the consultation I asked what happened when he was 5, a lunar cycle ago when the progressed Moon would have first progressed across the IC. His face whitened. He said, 'My mother died'. While a significant event was linked to this progression, it was the underlying grief and unexpressed feelings that the lunar progression remembered, allowing what was unmourned to be felt and acknowledged.

The house that the Moon is progressing through is a personal indicator of the emotional terrain for the next few years. (7) Its progression through the houses suggests what areas in our life need emotional focus and concern. As the Moon progresses from the 12<sup>th</sup> house of endings into the 1<sup>st</sup> house of life, the old cycle is emptied out and the new one is layered over this. Generally this passage synchronizes with a feeling of coming out, an emotional watershed and images of new beginnings.



As the progressed Moon moves through the horoscope we can identify what areas of our life are important during this period and where our emotional focus and security needs to be. As the Moon progresses, the houses are the psychic landscape where we sort through old habits, feelings and reactions, and emotionally build new forms of security.

Using a one-degree orb, the progressed Moon will remain in aspect to a planet for nearly two months. When working with the progressed Moon's aspects, be mindful of its natal aspects. When the progressed Moon contacts a planet that it natively aspects, it may be time to address some of the unconscious impulses underlying the planetary archetype, as complexes, feelings or moods might surface during this period of heightened emotions.

### The Three Phases of the Progressed Moon

Phase	<i>Youth</i>	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Elder</i>
<b>Life Stage</b>	Child	Parent	Grandparent
<b>Goddess</b>	Artemis	Mnemosyne	Hecate
<b>Matriarchal Stage</b>	Maiden	Mother	Crone
<b>Keyword</b>	Absorbing	Remembering	Feeling
<b>Ages of Full Cycle</b>	0 - 27.3	27.3 - 54.6	54.6 - 82
<b>Approximate Age at Waxing Square</b>	7	34	61
<b>at Opposition</b>	13 - 14	41	68
<b>at Waning Square</b>	20	47 - 48	75
<b>at Return</b>	27	54 - 55	82

### The Progressed Sun: Shining Light on the Shadow

The Progressed Sun symbolises our growing awareness of our self and the world at large. As the Sun progresses through the zodiac it builds tolerance through awareness of differences. A simple image is the Sun progression into the next sign. This element is at odds with the Sun sign, but through the progression we become conscious of a new way of being. Fire progresses into Earth, Earth into Air, Air into Water and Water into Fire; all remarkable baptisms for the self. This does not suggest we change, but does suggest we naturally expand our awareness of differences.

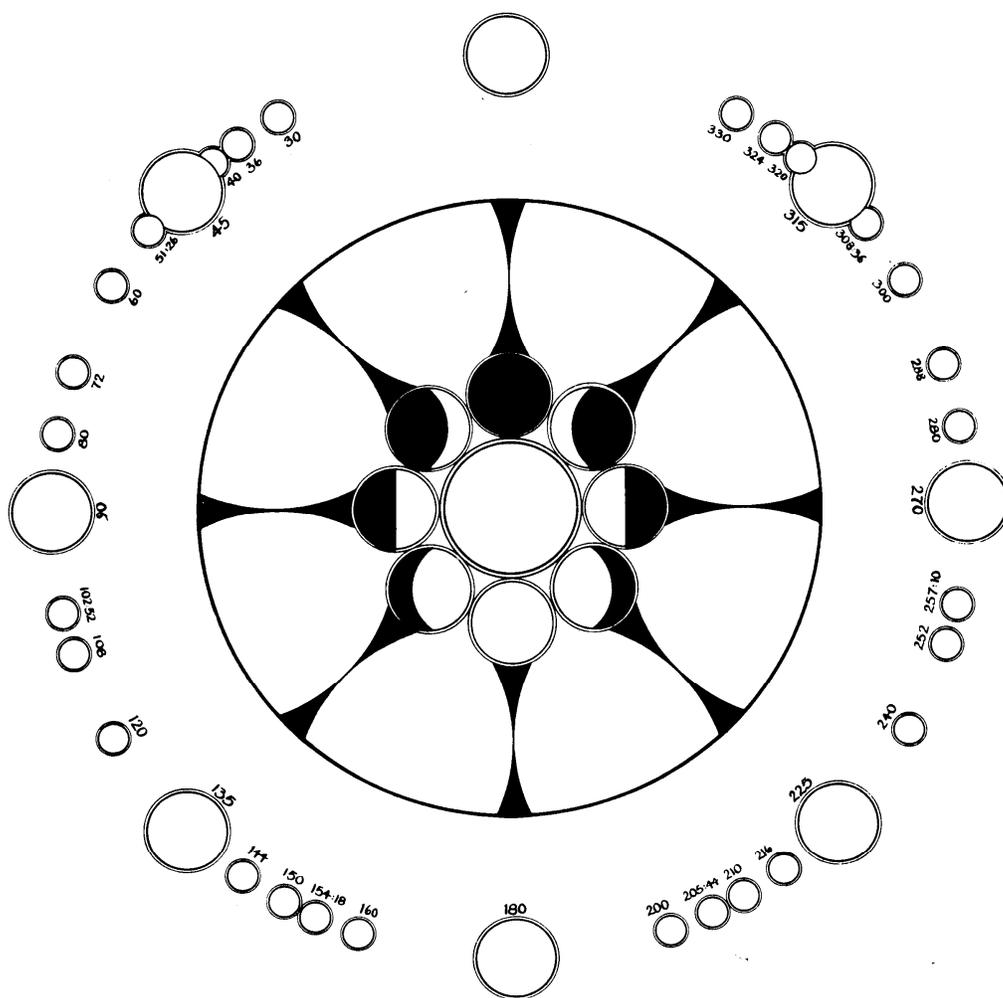
As the giver of light, the Sun illuminates any planet it aspects by progression. When the Sun is bright it reveals shadows; similarly, the progressed Sun casts light on internal darkness. As it progresses into the next sign we are more able to shed light on our own shadow characteristics. When it aspects natal planets, we are challenged become more conscious of the deeper facets of our nature.

The Progressed Sun is our emerging sense of individuality and burgeoning confidence, and in an average life span it progresses nearly a ¼ of the horoscope, savouring its experience in each modality and nearly every element. Using 12<sup>th</sup> harmonic aspects for the progressed Sun, it will aspect all the natal planets in 30 years, then repeats the sequence of aspects again suggesting another view or turn at self-integration.

## The Progressed Lunation Cycle: Soul Phases of Life

The progressed lunation cycle measures the evolving aspects between the progressed Sun and the progressed Moon after birth. The interlude from New Moon to New Moon is  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days; or in secondary time this is  $29\frac{1}{2}$  years. During this cycle the progressed Moon makes every possible aspect with the progressed Sun.

This is also the same interval as the Saturn cycle. The Saturn cycle is fixed and every individual completes a Saturn cycle near age  $29\frac{1}{2}$ ; however, the progressed Lunation cycle is personal, dependent on the angular relationship of Sun and Moon at birth. At  $29\frac{1}{2}$  years old the progressed Sun and the progressed Moon return to the same angular relationship as at birth, but this time both the Sun and Moon have progressed one zodiacal sign forward. The Progressed Lunation cycle maps out an 8-phase developmental cycle which is a profound soulful backdrop for one's life. The transits and transitions of one's life unfold in the context of these phases which honour the soul's time.



Words are not nearly as effective as experience, so I invite you to engage or re-engage with your secondaries, not from a literal or factual perspective but from an imaginal and soulful one. That's when the artistry of the technique appears.

## Endnotes

1. Synchronicity is important in any astrological discourse. I would recommend two outstanding astrological references for this: Michael Harding, *Hymns to Ancient Gods*, Arkana, London: 1992, 23 - 41 and Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, Penguin, New York, NY: 2006, 50 - 60.
2. Stephen Arroyo in *Astrology, Karma & Transformation* confirms this experience in saying 'It is my feeling that those whose main interest is the inner life of the individual should emphasize secondary progressions'.
3. Manoj Thulasides, The Nature of Time, [www.theunrealuniverse.com/2-nature-of-time](http://www.theunrealuniverse.com/2-nature-of-time) (accessed 16.07.2013)
4. For a more detailed exploration of secondary progression for students see Brian Clark, *Secondary Progressions*, Astro\*Synthesis, Melbourne - this can be ordered through their website at: <http://www.astrosynthesis.com.au/student-astrology-ebooklets/>
5. In *The Sibling Constellation* by Brian Clark (Penguin Arkana, London: 1999) there are examples of the progressed Moon synchronizing with the birth of a sibling and other pivotal points in the family life cycle.
6. Case study in *The Progressed Moon*, Apollon, Issue 4, December 1990, CPA Press. This article is available on the web at <http://www.cpalondon.com/Issue%20Four.pdf/>
7. Depending on the size of the house, the Moon will average 2 - 2½ years in the house.

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